# Table of Contents

Dearborn Park Elementary Walking Audit Overview ........................................ 2
Walking Audit Route ...................................................................................... 2
General Observations of the Walking Environment surrounding Dearborn Park Elementary ................................................................. 3
Top Recommendations for Dearborn Park Elementary School ............... 5
  1. Improve access from Chief Sealth Trail .............................................. 5
  2. Improve crossing at S Graham St and 28th Ave S ............................ 5
  3. Improve crossing safety of S Juneau St at Chief Sealth Trail ............. 5
Walking Audit Report Summary .................................................................. 6
Appendix II – The SRTS Program at Dearborn Park Elementary ............ 7
  Why encourage kids to walk and bike to school? ................................. 7
  Who is involved in the Safe Routes to Schools program? ..................... 7
Project Details / Methodology ................................................................... 8
Overview of Dearborn Park Elementary School ....................................... 9
Notes on School Arrival and Departure ................................................... 9
Appendix III – Participant List .................................................................... 10
Dearborn Park Elementary Walking Audit Overview

Dearborn Park Elementary School serves 350 kindergarten through fifth-grade students in Southeast Seattle. As part of the school’s Safe Routes to School grant project, a walking audit was conducted on May 15, 2013. This event, organized by Feet First, brought together community members and program partners to walk a chosen route in order to observe and assess the walking environment for students. The 3-fold purpose of the resulting report is to:

1. Record the observations of participants
2. Present prioritized recommendations for improvements, and
3. Serve as a tool to inform and enhance SRTS grant activity at Dearborn Park Elementary.

While the event and reporting process are designed to be highly collaborative, the final walking audit report is a product of Feet First. All recommendations herein are made by Feet First and may not necessarily reflect the opinions of each individual involved. Any questions about this report should be directed to Feet First.

Walking Audit Route

The map above shows the walking audit route. The route was determined based on school district student locator maps and community input regarding areas of high pedestrian or bicycle traffic and/or perceived safety issues.
General Observations of the Walking Environment surrounding Dearborn Park Elementary

**Park Proximity:**

Dearborn Park, which flanks the north and east boundaries of Dearborn Park Elementary School, features open space, a play structure, and a wooded area. The park was described by several group participants as a benefit for students and community members. Given that the park surrounds the north and east access routes to school, it is important to consider safety and comfort needs for students crossing through. In January 2013, Feet First organized a clean-up project for overgrowth on the sidewalks leading to the entrance of this park. This area is a regular route for a walking school bus led by Dearborn Park Principal and parent volunteers. The park seems to be widely regarded as an amenity and great community asset.

**Separation of Modes/Porosity:**

Dearborn Park benefits from having distinctly separate entrances for buses, cars, and pedestrians. The school campus has many points of entry for the various modes that students and families may use. Rather than funneling all foot and vehicular traffic to one area, the school allows student entry/exit at the front and rear wing doors, thereby avoiding potential conflicts and safety issues.

**Trail Proximity:**

The Chief Sealth Trail runs northwest to southeast along the west side of the Dearborn Park Elementary campus. The trail is an amenity for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as students or families who prefer a quieter walking environment away from busy neighborhood streets. The trail is not conveniently located for every student who may wish to walk, but it is a unique and pleasant option for many, and is popular with cyclists and walkers.

Drivers in the area experience dead ends and sharp turns where the Chief Sealth trail interrupts the urban grid. Navigating some streets can be confusing due to fewer through-streets than many areas nearby.
**Grant-Related Engineering Improvements:**

In the summer of 2012, the Seattle Department of Transportation installed a new sidewalk on the south side of S Orcas St between Beacon Ave S and 28\textsuperscript{th} Ave S. This major pedestrian improvement was funded by a Safe Routes to School grant from the Washington State Department of Transportation and Bridging the Gap funds from the City of Seattle. The sidewalk creates a pedestrian connection where none existed previously between the residences at the top of Beacon Hill, the business area at the bottom of the slope, and the school crossing guard stationed at the entrance to the school campus.

- South side of S Orcas St near 32\textsuperscript{nd} Ave S before improvements
- South side of S Orcas St near 32\textsuperscript{nd} Ave S after improvements

*S Orcas St looking west, before and after improvements*
Top Recommendations for Dearborn Park Elementary School

1. Improve access from Chief Sealth Trail

When approaching the campus from the Chief Sealth Trail going south, pedestrians have beaten an unofficial path from the north end of the school parking lot to Causey’s Learning Center. Prior to the winter of 2012-2013, students could traverse safely in front of Causeys’ building, avoiding the parking lot to get directly to the front door of the school. However, a fence has been installed in front of Causey’s to enclose a play area, and pedestrians now are channeled around the back of the building. At the time of the walking audit, the building windows were shaded and the siding was spray-painted with a gang symbol, creating conditions that are not suitable for a school walk route. Without this route, pedestrians tend to walk directly south down the grassy slope, entering into the path of moving traffic at the school drop-off and pick-up traffic circle – another unacceptable option.

A safe walking approach to the northwest side of campus is critically needed to improve pedestrian access. Work with the school and Causey’s to make use of a $1,000 minigrant from the Seattle Department of Transportation. Improve landscaping in this area, and install a gate that can be locked by Causey’s staff when the play area is in use.

2. Improve crossing at S Graham St and 28th Ave S

S Graham St is a direct connector to the freeway. Speed of vehicles was cited as a safety concern by participants, as was decreased visibility of pedestrians and cyclists because of the slope and tree overgrowth. This intersection should be made safer for students and other residents by:

- Using speed radar and targeted enforcement (SPD, SDOT)
- Installing pedestrian flag buckets (Feet First)
- Trimming back tree branches that obscure crosswalk signage (SDOT)
- Double-siding the crosswalk signs to increase visibility of marked crosswalk (SDOT)
- Conducting a “crosswalk action” with school students and area residents (Feet First)

3. Improve crossing safety of S Juneau St at Chief Sealth Trail

This portion of the route has a disjointed trail connection, no sidewalk, and poor sightlines due to the steep slope of S Juneau St. Work with SDOT engineers to look at signage options that will allow pedestrian access while reducing the risk of collisions in this location. Feet First has conducted safety education at this intersection with parents and students, which should continue with the help of walking school bus leaders using this route.
Walking Audit Report Summary

The Dearborn Park neighborhood has many assets for walking, as well as a few barriers and concerns. The participation of families and community members in the walking audit event shows the interest of the community in pedestrian safety for students walking to Dearborn Park Elementary. Through the efforts of these individuals as well as grant partners from the school, Feet First, Cascade Bicycle Club, the Seattle Police Department, and the Seattle Department of Transportation, the Safe Routes to School program is well underway at Dearborn Park. This walking audit report identifies barriers to walking to and from Dearborn Park Elementary School. Making it safe for elementary school children to walk to school and bike in the area relies on addressing issues from multiple directions. Using a combination of education, encouragement, enforcement, and engineering approaches, the walking and biking environment at Dearborn Park Elementary can be greatly enhanced.
## Appendix I - Field Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation Pt.</th>
<th>Field Observations</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School grounds</td>
<td>The circulation pattern at the school is flexible and effective. Some of the sidewalks are uneven and could use updating. The school’s practice of keeping multiple entrances accessible in the morning and afternoon benefits students walking from all directions.</td>
<td>Repair uneven sidewalks.</td>
<td><img src="image1.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail crossing</td>
<td>This is a blind intersection, and it’s not clear where the trail meets up again. Additionally, there is no sidewalk to make connection to trail along Juneau. Existing signage is nearly invisible—participants attribute speeding along Juneau to drivers who get lost and frustrated by the irregular street grid.</td>
<td>Work with SDOT on appropriate signage. Educate students to stay to left when walking with no sidewalk, to listen for oncoming traffic, and to cross where sightlines are best.</td>
<td><img src="image2.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th Ave S &amp;</td>
<td>The trail has a break marked by bollards at 30th Ave S. From that point, the ground is gravely and there is no sidewalk to connect south to Graham. Crosswalk signs at Graham are sometimes blocked by branches and sightline issues for vehicles traveling west. The crosswalk is faded.</td>
<td>Double face signs for increased visibility. Trim low-hanging branches. Mark preferred route for pedestrians and cyclists leaving the trail. Re-paint crosswalk.</td>
<td><img src="image3.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Pt.</td>
<td>Intersection</td>
<td>Community Asset</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d 28th Ave S and S Graham St</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e 28th Ave S between S Graham St and S Juneau St</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f Path from Chief Sealth Trail to School Grounds</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Pt.</td>
<td>Intersection</td>
<td>Community Asset</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g  Dearborn Park behind School</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h  S Orcas St</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix II – The SRTS Program at Dearborn Park Elementary

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a growing movement to encourage and support active commuting by school children and families. At the intersection of public health, public safety, education, and transportation, SRTS helps communities by making it safer, easier, and more common for children to walk or bike to school. Safe Routes to School solutions are multi-faceted and can be categorized into the “5 E’s”: Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, and Evaluation.

Why encourage kids to walk and bike to school?
Increasing physical activity lowers obesity rates, improves lung-related health, and enhances readiness to learn by lowering stress levels. However, over the past generation activity levels and obesity rates have gotten worse. The rate of students walking or biking to school has fallen from 48 percent to 13 percent, while childhood obesity rates have tripled. This change has serious consequences; obesity’s role in diabetes and heart disease make it one of the two leading causes of preventable death in King County.

Who is involved in the Safe Routes to Schools program?
Safe Routes to Schools programs rely on a diverse group of participants. Under the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Safe Route to School program, the primary participants are:

City of Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT): SDOT is the managing and fiscal agent of the Dearborn Park Elementary School SRTS grant. SDOT has a SRTS department that focuses grant funds and funding from the Bridging the Gap Levy on safe pedestrian and bicycle transportation enhancements near schools. SDOT’s SRTS Coordinator, Brian Dougherty, is involved in all aspects of this grant.

Dearborn Park Elementary: This school collaborated with SDOT to apply for a SRTS grant from WSDOT with the intent to improve conditions for walking and biking to school. The school teachers and staff are critical allies in creating opportunities to engage students to participate in education and encouragement events that are part of the SRTS grant.
Parents / Students / Community Members: Parents, students and community members provide invaluable information about their community’s assets and barriers. These participants are the clients of this grant and are critical to the success of the project.

Feet First: Since 2001, Feet First, Washington’s only pedestrian advocacy nonprofit organization, has been working to ensure walkable communities. Feet First promotes walkable communities for health, transportation, environment and enjoyment, helping people take steps that create better places to live, learn, shop, work and play. Feet First provides the education, encouragement and evaluation aspects of SRTS grants.

Cascade Bicycle Club Education Foundation: The Cascade Bicycle Club Education Foundation (CBCEF) was created in 2001 to provide education programs and consulting services to the local community, in the interest of creating a better community through bicycling. CBCEF works with schools on bicycle safety education programs and SRTS grants.

**Project Details / Methodology**

The following steps were undertaken to produce the walking audit event and report.

1) **Information Gathering:** Feet First met with Principal, school district personnel and PTA to gain an understanding of where students live, where they go after school, and the biggest challenges they face walking and biking in the neighborhood.

2) **Ground-Truthing:** Feet First visited the neighborhood and compared map data and in-person observations. Notes and photographs were taken on pedestrian infrastructure-related assets and issues. Based on these observations, points of interest were chosen and a route map was prepared for the community walking audit. Based on feedback from stakeholders the route was adjusted to represent the goals and concerns of the community members.

3) **Scheduling:** Wednesday, May 15, 2013 was chosen for the walking audit event. This day was chosen based on availability of the school and participants’ schedules. The audit was conducted from 1:15 pm to 3:30 pm.

4) **Outreach:** Feet First sought participation from parents, city and district staff, and other community members. Fliers and newsletter material were provided for outreach to the school community.

5) **Group Participation:** Audit participants were given field note sheets, clipboards, and digital cameras to use during the event. Feet First led the walk and facilitated conversation about safe walking in the neighborhood. Participants recorded their observations by writing on the maps and taking photographs.
6) Reporting: Feet First compiled the findings into this report. The field notes represent the compiled comments and corresponding photographs taken by participants.

Overview of Dearborn Park Elementary School

Dearborn Park Elementary serves over 350 K-5 students representing great cultural diversity in the Dearborn Park neighborhood of the City of Seattle. According to the Safe Routes to School Student In-Class Travel Tally, 11 percent of students currently walk to school, while 42 percent arrive by school bus, 42 percent arrive by private vehicle, and less than 1 percent of students bike.

Notes on School Arrival and Departure

As part of the Washington State Department of Transportation SRTS grant, Feet First conducted an in-depth twelve-month analysis of student arrival and departure procedures for Dearborn Park Elementary. Feet First worked with the school’s Safety Committee to create a circulation plan and communication procedures to be implemented starting the 2013-2014 school year. Please contact Feet First SRTS Program Director Jen Cole by calling 206-652-2310 ext. 2 or emailing jen@feetfirst.org for questions or concerns regarding the arrival and departure study.
Appendix III – Participant List

In order to gather participants for the community walking audit, Feet First reached out to parents, neighbors, and other stakeholders. A list of participants is shown below:

Jenny Almgren, Cascade Bicycle Club

Angela Bogan, Dearborn Park Elementary Principal

Hayley Bonsteel, Feet First

Caitlin Callaghan, Feet First

Gina Coffman, Toole Design

Jen Cole, Feet First

Jessica McCardell, Dearborn Park Parent/Neighbor

Julie Salathe, Cascade Bicycle Club

Joe Shlichta, Dearborn Park Parent/Neighbor

Howard Wu, Seattle Department of Transportation

5 children from Dearborn Park

1 teacher from Causey’s Learning Center

8 students from Causey’s Learning Center